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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

MONDAY, February 24, 1941

(FCR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "FOOD AND HEALTH NOTES." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U.S.D.A.

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The more you know about the way food affects health, the better you can plan meals to keep your family fit. Nutrition discoveries have been coming in thick and fast the last few years. Almost every day there's more news from the laboratories to help you in the job of feeding the family. Here today are news notes from a number of State experiment stations where nutrition research is going on.

Recent news from the Mississippi Station makes you wonder if animals aren't sometimes luckier than humans in the food they get to eat. Nutrition workers testing food for the iron that builds red blood and prevents anemia found the blackstrap molasses, used for feeding stock, much richer in iron than the light refined sirups many people use on the table. The darker, less refined sirups made from sorgo or cane, especially those made in iron or copper pans, proved better for preventing and curing anemia than the more refined sirups.

Another news note from the Mississippi Station is about the iron in greens and in peas and beans. Tests with familiar Southern foods like turnip tops and collards; and with cowpeas, pinto beans and soybeans showed that beans and peas were more valuable for iron than the greens. Apparently, the body does not use the iron in green leaves as well as it does the iron in peas and beans.

From the Montana Station comes a good broad hint that right now is the time of year to start giving your family extra fruits and vegetables every day. The Montana Station found that vegetables like potatoes and cabbage in storage as well as canned beans and peas lose their vitamin C little by little during

the months. By late winter and spring, they don't have as much vitamin C to give you as they had in the fall. To make up for the loss, you and your family need to eat second helpings--or even thirds--of the vegetables and fruits that come on the table. Or you need a larger variety of these foods in your meals. By the way, apples also lose vitamin C gradually during storage.

Now for a note on mineral oil from the Arizona Station. Doctors and nutrition workers have long agreed that laxative medicine was unnecessary for normal people who eat the right food. Recently workers at the Arizona Station have been learning something about the effect of mineral oil on the body. They have been giving mineral oil to laboratory animals. And they have found that the oil dissolves vitamins A and D and carries them off from the body. Vitamins A and D are especially necessary at this time of year to keep up resistance against colds and similar ills. Too much mineral oil not only may rob you of these helpful vitamins; it may also hinder the body in building and repairing bones and teeth. You see, the body can't use calcium and phosphorus in food to build teeth without the help of vitamin D. Take away vitamin D and no amount of calcium or phosphorus does any good.

Many people who are trying to lose weight and not eat fattening food, use mineral oil in salad dressing instead of salad oil. This is probably unfortunate for the person who is dieting, for it means that he may miss out on the vitamin A in the green and yellow vegetables or in other foods he may eat at the same time. People who are dieting to get thin are likely to go shy on vitamins anyway. Too bad to lose even more by mineral oil salad dressing. Probably the safest time to take mineral oil, if you must, is the last thing at night, hours after your last meal when the body will have had a chance to use the vitamins in your food.

From the Wisconsin Station comes a note about gelatin and strong muscles. You may have heard that if you eat enough gelatin, you will be able to do more

muscular work without getting tired. Wisconsin nutrition workers tested this idea on a group of women students. The girls who ate a lot of gelatin were just as tired from exercise and were not any stronger than the girls who ate no gelatin.

Workers at the Florida Station found out that anemia and stunted mental and physical growth among children might go way back to the soil. They found that not only children but cattle raised on soil very low in iron, copper, cobalt and possibly other minerals suffered from deficiency diseases. The cattle could not get enough of the right kind of minerals from forage crops growing on this soil. And the children could not be well-nourished on milk and meat from under-nourished animals, and vegetables and other foods grown on this poor soil.

Both the children and the animals made a remarkable pick-up in health and growth when the minerals they lacked were added to their diets.

Last of all here's a note about butter and vitamin A from the Wisconsin Station. This Station finds that butter made early last summer and kept in storage may be richer in vitamin A made in the last few weeks. Last summer the cows were eating fresh green pasture with plenty of vitamin A in it while this winter they may have been living on hay that is low in the vitamin.

That's all the news notes for today.

